

JULY-AUGUST 1933

RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

(Reprint)

OFFICIAL ORGAN HAPPY HOURS BROTHERHOOD.

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THE ENGLISH NOVELS OF TODAY.

By Reckless Ralph Cumminga

Do you know boys, that England is still putting out novels regularly, week after week? A fine selection is to be had too, such as Western, Sea, Air, School, Athletic, and even the World War stories.

What is the matter with America? England is producing novels for both the boys of England and America. They make a hit over on this side of the pond, so the question comes up, Why do American publishers ignore an existing demand for this type of publication?

THE THRILLER-Each issue contains a complete long story; a different detective story each week. Price 2d, amounting to about 4¢ in our money. Then there comes trooping along, such novels as, BOY'S FRIEND-BUFFALO BILL NOVELS-BASEBALL NOVELS-FOOTBALL NOVELS-SCHOOLBOY'S OWN LIBRARY-CHAMPION LIBRARY-and what not.

For thrilling, up-to-date stories, the BULLS-EYE and the SURPRISE cannot be beat.. NELSON LEE is another, with the famous Nighthawk and his school and detective stories, etc.

A new series has just started, being THE DETECTIVE WEEKLY, stepping into the shoes of that fine weekly, the late UNION JACK. Talk of old age, UNION JACK gasped it's last with No. 1531.

Another new one is the BOY'S WONDER, about the same size as our old dime novels, 64 or more pages, thrilling illustration on the cover. Some of the early Nos. are:

VOLUME TWO.

NUMBER TWENTY-ONE

No.1.The Squadron of Death,by Geo.F.Rochester; No.2.For Glory and the Legion,by Leslie Beresford; No.5.Volcano Gold,by Eric W.Townsend;No.9.The Ghost Ship,by Rodney Holland; No.11.The Flaming Frontier,by Robert Harding, and others that are winners,too.

To return to the SURPRISE,the first number appeared Mar.5,1932,entitled "The Red Triangle", a cracking good story of some of the most clever crooks in the world;The Countess; Shorty the Nighthawk;Jack Cattermole; Caleb and Squibbs are all in this hair-raiser.

Then there's the man with a Thousand Million Pounds,the largest sum of money ever collected in the world,lying on top of a table;the whole stupendous sum being then flung to a penniless tramp. Suddenly,as if by magic,he finds himself in possession of a vast sum of money beyond imagination and wildest dreams. Money for glittering jewels,luxurious cars,flashing yachts,skimming aeroplanes,sumptuous food; more money than the most reckless spendthrift could waste in a lifetime.

What would you have done with such a vast amount, as though poured into your lap by the fabled King Midas,himself? What will the tramp do with it? Learn how he used it in this colorful,new-style story." The Man With Ll,000,000,000."

"When Midnight Chimes"; a story in itself, tense,terrific,thrilling,throbbing,stirring, startling,surprising,and staggering. The eerie hour when mystery stalks with romance. Money isn't everything.This is the story of a poor boy.

Then comes "The Texas Trio", three who came all the way from England to take possession of a ranch into which they had sunk all they had; a story of the Lone Valley Ranch.

Now for the ace of Tec's; another humdinger. Here you meet Kiddie Wix, the pretty little flapper who proved the greatest SURPRISE of all. She being a little orphan with no relatives or friends to help her, helps herself. "Kiddie Wix's, the Ace of Tec's."

All these stories are in No.1 of THE SURPRISE and pictures accompany each story. Can you beat it? Guess not. A surprise in every story. The paper every boy is talking about. The biggest and best surprises of all. The big-hit story paper.

Read "The Girl in the Iron Muzzle, The Helmeted Highwaymen", all hair raisers. Look this list over, Aren't they humdingers: The Lantern of Doom-The Park Lane Raiders-The Strange Procession-The Ghost Girl-Vagabond Isle-The King's Sheriff-The Man in the Glass Case-The Prisoner of Oldgate Gaol-Wild Fury-The Monk from the Cave-The White Vulture-The Crimson Bat-The White Sceptre-The Casket of Peril-The Phantom Thief-The Red Triangle-Rogues of the Red Robe-The Midnight Mail-The Bridge of Fear-The Strange Gathering-Martin Hall, Detective-The Monk at Bay-The Menacing Monk-Deep Sea Raiders-The Bombed Police Van-The Steel Intruder, and other gripping yarns. The illustrations themselves will convince you without a doubt.

Now to go back to THE BULLS-EYE. This is another blood-curdling story paper. Hits the mark every time. Some of the titles are: The Sign of the Crimson Dagger-The Man With a Thousand Faces-Scarbrand-The Second Cell-Secrets of Stonemoor-The Purple Phial-The House of Thrills-The Cloud of Doom-and The Ghost in the River.. No.1 made its appearance Jan.24, 1931 and is still going strong. THE BULLS-EYE is made up on the same principle as the SURPRISE, except that it has no colored front covers like SURPRISE.

However, it is full of exciting stories from cover to cover. There's the "House of Thrills", something doing in every room, murders, and what not.. "The Twelve Evil Men" is a gripping story introducing Paul Power, who brings to justice, the first of the evil men. Thrill upon thrill from cover to cover.

Now let's take a peep at No.1 of THE THRILLER. This issue appeared Feb.9, 1929. Edgar Wallaces new novel, "Red Aces", the new paper with a thousand thrills, a gripping new book-length story; 28 pages, 3 columns to the page, well illustrated, colored picture on the cover. Full of thrills and dramatic adventure. Here's a short list of the gripping thrillers: "Lynch Law" by Hugh Cleverly; "Kennedy, the Con Man" by Edgar Wallace; "The Man Who Quit" by Anthony Skene; "The Screaming Skull" by Fenton Arnold; "The Temple of Terror" by L.C. DOUTHWAITE; "Gang War", a complete dramatic novel of the underworld, by John G. Brandon; "The Killer" by L.C. Douthwaite; "Doomed" by Anthony Skene; "Tong Law" by Edmund Snell; "Red Terror" by Hugh Cleverly; "The Man From Sing Sing" by Edgar Wallace; "The Terror of Michigan" by Murdoch Duncan; "The Silent Terror" by Edmund Snell; "The Nameless Terror" by John Hunter; "The Terror of Manchuria" by John G. Brandon; "The Crime of A.F. Raffles" by Barry Peroune; and "Raffles on the Spot" also by Peroune.

So now you have a list of some of the exciting tales that appear in THE THRILLER every week, and each story complete.

As stated before, THE DETECTIVE WEEKLY is a new one in the field, to take the place of the extinct UNION JACK. No.1 appeared Feb.25, 1933. The title is, "Get Me Scotland Yard-Quick". No.2, is, "Sexton Blake at Bay", both these stories by Lewis Jackson.

This recital will give you a glimpse into just a bit of what Old Merrie England is doing for dime novel readers at the present time.

Let us all hope that Good Old America will see fit to bring forth a nice assortment of these thrilling yarns of Gangland, The World War, Detective, Western, School, Sports, and other types of stories, for which we have been waiting so long.

AU REVOIR.

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A FEW MORE RARE OLD-TIMERS.

By Robert H. Smoltzor.

My article, "Four Rare Boys' Libraries" appeared in the May, 1933 issue of "BLOOD AND THUNDER".

Luck has been with me for I've landed five fine old-timers since then, and it is a pleasure to describe them to you. The sizes run about six by nine, forty to one hundred and twelve pages.

AMERICAN TALES, No. 16—Old Hal Williams, The Spy of Atlanta; American News Co., 1865, with handsome colored cover, chiefly yellow. The author, J. Thomas Warren.

"Sea Drift" or The Wreckers of the Channel, Frederick A. Brady. Handsome vari-colored cover and author, ,alcolm J. Errym. Illustrated by Darley. No date, but a real old-timer.

Next come two Dick & Fitzgerald novels, "The Jew's Daughter, Miriam", a Tale of City Life by Ned Buntline. Yellow tinted cover.

"The Adventures of Clarence Bolton" or Life in New York; Joseph A. Scoville; 50 illustrations, with dull yellow cover.

Lastly, a novel dated 1845 entitled, "The Knights of Seven Lands" by J. H. Ingraham, Esq. Published by F. Gleason, Boston, with dull gray covers.

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP.

Each and every one of these novels is a prize in itself. Notwithstanding the fact that I own thousands of novels, still when I land single items of this rare type, it is a red-letter day, so to speak. The fine lists of interesting titles on the back cover pages add to the value of the novels.

Notwithstanding their age and the hard usage given them, the fine rag paper has held up to a remarkable degree.

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THE DIME NOVEL

Its place in American Literature

By Ralph F. Adimare

"Ballou-the Father of the Dime Novel"

Part 4.

The great achievement of Maturin Murray Ballou in organizing and stabilizing the popular books and periodicals before the Civil War gave the American artist the life breath that Emerson, Poe and Whitman had fought for in their battles against the European domination. When FLAG OF OUR UNION, the most important story paper of the 40's and 50's, Gleason's, later Ballou's Pictorial, the first great illustrated magazine, and Ballou's Dollar Monthly, the first all-fiction magazine were all launched and they came at a time when HARPERS-ATLANTIC-PUTNAM'S, and other pious periodicals refused to consider the American artists. To the editors of these foreign magazines, American material was of minor importance. In twenty years, Ballou's policies had crushed all this. American artists, writers painters and sculptors began to be employed almost exclusively by the publishers. William T. Porter in 1847, two years after Ballou's debut as a novelist and editor, decided to publish only American sketches in his world-famous weekly, THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES.

This weekly, established Dec. 1831 in New York, had always somewhat ignored American writers. It was a sporting magazine and by some is considered the real daddy of American Sports. According to Francis Brinley in his life of William T. Porter, the latter and not H. W. Herbert (Frank Forester) should be credited with the introduction of sporting writing in native literature. So one periodical after another joined the bandwagon. By 1860 only the conservative magazines stuck to the foreign flags.

It was just about this time, 1862, that Ballou quit the publishing field. He had, together with Frederick Gleason, introduced the following decisive innovations in cheap periodical and book publications.

Besides the three magazines above mentioned, Gleason and Ballou as editor, introduced the first numbered series of Western (Blood and Thunder) stories. This was in 1845, the same year that saw the birth of FLAG OF OUR UNION. The novels originally sold for 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ or a York Shilling. (This was a slang term for a coin then in vogue, the value of which was little more than 10¢. It was used with derision in New York City). They were hand-colored and ranged in size from 12mo to quarto. Some had Black & White illustrations inside the book, and the average length was about 80 pages. These were issued monthly.

He got a group of writers together and consistently used their efforts in his papers and early dime novels. Among them were: Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, Benjamin Barker, E. C. Z. Judson (Ned Buntline), Sylvanus Cobb, Jr., J. DuRivage, J. H. Ingraham (who later became a minister, he was so ashamed of his early writings, which were harmless indeed), J. H. Robinson, and plenty of others. One of these sensational writers, Justin B. Jones (Harry Hazel) quit him

and started his own story paper in Boston, called "Harry Hazel's Yankee Blade", which hit a lot of Ballou's circulations.

With Gleason, together they encouraged a nation-wide sale of their paper books and magazines and had agents in nearly every large city in the United States. Usually the publishers were content with the local market and left the rest of the country shift for itself. Thus New York would have a group of publishers fighting for the local customers. Another group would fight in Baltimore or Cincinnati, or Chicago, for their respective trade. This was wasteful, for a Dickens book for instance, might be published within a short time in about 8 cities. If Boston got hold of a book by Bulwer Lytton, say for example, "The Last of the Barons", soon New York, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Richmond, Chicago, and Buffalo, would be printing it. Therefore an American had to be a master genius to sell his books. The mere mention that a book was written by an Englishman was enough to set a dozen revolutions in progress in the dozen cities where that fortunate Englishman's book was published. The American public could not eat up foreign stuff fast enough. Ballou therefore aimed at a different public than the British fed fans. He put the sensationalism in American popular literature. We have shown in a previous article that Park Benjamin in 1839, placed a cheap literature in the hands of a vast audience, a part of the public which a few years before had been non est. This vast group became smothered in the maudlin mush of the English, French, and German writers, so that it could not appreciate the quaint the crude native writers. That's one reason why James Fenimore Cooper became popular. He was very facile at imitating Scott.

EXIT UNION JACK

By Wm.M.Burns

Another old time novel has gone the way of all the others, after a run of nearly 39 years. I refer to the UNION JACK LIBRARY, published by the Amalgamated Press of London, England. This Library probably had the longest run of any novel ever published, having a run of 1531 numbers, this being the last No. published, dated Feb. 18, 1933.

It's nearest competitor, to the best of my knowledge, was our old-time WIDE AWAKE LIBRARY which had a run of nearly 1400 issues. In No. 1000 of UNION JACK, is published something of its history. From it, I glean the following facts.

No. 1 was published Apr. 27, 1894 and sold for half a penny. No. 2 was titled "Sexton Blake, Detective" and from that time on, the library was devoted to the adventures of Sexton Blake.

In 1903 it was slightly enlarged and the price increased to a penny. During the World War, due to the high cost of print paper and other printing materials, the cost was again increased a half penny. And, in Oct. 1920 with issue No. 886, it was again enlarged and price increased to 2d. At this time, also, the two-color covers, printed on gloss paper were first used in place of the former pink paper and one color covers, which had been used for years.

To the novel reading public of England, Sexton Blake meant as much or more, than our own Nick Carter meant to us. As in addition to the UNION JACK LIBRARY, the SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY had a run for a number of years, and possibly may still be being published.

And with the demise of UNION JACK, The SEXTON BLAKE DETECTIVE WEEKLY was started.

From all this, we can see how popular a fiction character he was, and still is.

I have about 200 issues of UNION JACK, not in sequence, but in odd numbers between 905 and 1333; also a bound volume of 25 numbers in the 7 or 800's.

So you can see how impossible it is for me to write a real comprehensive article on this Library. Instead of doing so, I will tell something about the characters in those I have, and mention a few of my favorites.

Blake had many friends who aided him at various times, but his only regular aids were his young assistant Tinker and his blood-hound, Pedro. Pedro was a great aid in running down criminals, and many times was the means of tracking and finding his master, or Tinker, when in the hands of criminals, and a number of times saved their lives in various other ways. An odd thing about Union Jack, compared to our American Libraries; various authors were writing all the time for Union Jack, and of course, writing only Sexton Blake stories. One week we have a story of Blake combating the Confederation, the next week a story by an altogether different author about Zenith, the Albino, or Professor Kew. The favorite criminal characters were never killed off. Blake after a hard struggle would arrest and jail his man, only to have him break jail and escape, or perhaps at the last minute escape Blake's clutches, to bob up a few weeks later to figure as a leading character in another story. Similar to "Dr. Quartz" and "Dazar" in our Nick Carter tales.

The editor of UNION JACK constantly was asking his readers to write in their likes and dislikes, and comments. Various of them did so, insisting their favorite characters should be used over and over again.

This is the real reason that Blake had so much apparent trouble in holding his man when he once had him.

However, this by no means was always the case. Many weeks would detail an adventure of Blake after some minor crook, and he always "nailed" him.

My favorite character in these tales, was Zenith the Albino, so-called because he actually was an Albino.

Of the gentleman crook sort of type, when brainy and sharp, somehow or other Blake never could quite catch him, though he nearly always fooled him in his criminal schemes.

(To be Continued)

SAD NEWS

I've just heard that WILLIAM L. BECK of Davenport, Iowa, a member of H.H.B. has just died.

Also--WILLIAM WALLACE COOK, a writer of old timers, but not a member.

More news of both in the next issue.

ADVERTISERS IN THE ORIGINAL.

This being a Reprint (as of August, 1963) we will not itemize the items Wanted or For Sale.

The following Advertisers appeared in the original issue:

J. EDWARD LEITHEAD-Philadelphia, Pa.

AMERICAN DIME NOVEL EXCHANGE-N.Y. City.

BOOK EXCHANGE-Toledo, Ohio.

WM.M. KRELING-San Francisco, California.

VALLEY NOVEL EXCHANGE-Grafton, Mass.

S. NATHAN- Paterson, New Jersey.

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Original issue was printed in Red on white glossy paper.

